

Higher Education Reform: Indonesia and Latin America

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Indonesia is engaged in the implementation of a new paradigm for its higher education system, and the August 2001 International Conference that took place in Jakarta was an extraordinary opportunity to look at the Indonesia's initiative from the point of view of what other countries and regions are doing. Other countries in South East Asia are moving in similar education reforms, and I was asked bring some perspectives on how the Latin American countries are trying to cope with similar issues.

The common challenges

In spite of large differences in social structures, economic conditions, cultural and historical backgrounds, higher education systems in all countries face similar challenges, often in contradiction to each other. They have to improve their ability to do research, enhancing their countries' presence in a world where science and technology play an ever-growing role; they have to combine elite with mass higher education, providing meaningful and useful contents to millions of students and adults who want to learn more and improve their education credentials; they have to provide continuous education to a large public that is not just seeking formal degrees, but trying to keep up and readapt to a rapidly evolving labor market; and they want their universities to remain and grow as centers for culture and scholarship, providing their societies with a space for the development and maintenance of critical knowledge, independent thinking, social identity building, and values.

To deal with these and other similar demands, higher education institutions face two main limitations. First, resources. The same factors leading to higher education reform are also limiting the availability of resources the countries can provide to higher education institutions – the financial adjustments required by a highly competitive and unpredictable global economy, and the growing demands for better social services and attention by populations living in conditions of poverty,

increasing the costs of basic education and public health, and limiting what is available for higher education expansion and reform. Second, institutional arrangements and traditions. Almost everywhere, higher education institutions are organized as part of the public service, often with strong collegial decision-making mechanisms. But the rules, regulations and operational practices of civil service and collegial management are not the most suitable to a rapidly changing and challenging environment.

The Indonesian Strategy

The main thrust of the Higher Education Strategy in Indonesia today is to grant full autonomy to its four main public universities – University of Indonesia, Gajah Mada University, Institute of Technology of Bandung, Bogor Agricultural University.¹ With autonomy, they should be managed in ways similar to private corporations, handling their resources without the formal restrictions of line budgeting and financial procedures (which, in Indonesia, date back from the times of Dutch colonial administration in the early 20th century); adjusting their teaching and research programs according to the changing needs of their environment; creating their own rules for hiring, paying and dismissing their staff; and looking for additional sources of income. Once this initiative is consolidated, the expectation is that autonomy would be extended to other institutions, creating a system of tiered competition among higher education institutions which has been the central concept presiding the on-going “Development of Undergraduate Education” (DUE) program.

This is not a privatization strategy. The Indonesian education authorities believe that the government should continue to support the country’s main universities, but that this support should take the form of block grants, according to well-defined formulae, and that the universities should be accountable for their long-term results, and not for the formalities in the way the resources are spent. However, they expect that the universities will be able to raise additional resources through the provision of research and education services, and that they will reorganize themselves

¹ This strategy is part of a much broader effort to reform the country’s higher education system. For a full description, see *Higher Education Strategy – Implementation of the New Paradigm*, document prepared by Indonesia’s Task Force on Higher Education, steered by M. K. Tadjudin, Willi Toisuta, Bagyo Moeliodiharto, Iman Taufik, Sudjana Sapiie (final draft, July 2000).

in ways similar to private sector corporations, developing the ability to assess their comparative advantages and limitations, and make the appropriate decisions.

Latin America – Historical Background

To compare this experience, in any meaningful way, with what is taking place in Latin America, it is necessary to provide an overview, however briefly, of the way higher education was established in Latin America, and how it developed until the present.²

Latin America was colonized by the Portuguese, Spanish, and, to a lesser degree, French, Dutch and English colonial powers since the 16th Century, a colonial experience that ended, for most countries, in the early 19th century. The Portuguese colony remained unified as one large country, Brazil, currently with about 170 million inhabitants, and a territory of above 8 million square kilometers; the old Spanish empire broke down into dozens independent countries along the Pacific and Central America, with Mexico as the largest, with about one hundred million population, followed by Argentina, and several medium a small size countries. Besides the differences in size, Latin American countries differ sharply on their social and ethnic composition, educational and economic conditions. In the Pacific, from Southern Chile to Mexico, and including what is today Bolivia, Peru, and Guatemala, the Spanish conquerors found highly organized and developed societies – the Incas, Mayas, Quechuas, Aymaras, Aztecs – which had their political organization and economic system destroyed by the Europeans, leaving large populations speaking their own languages and being exploited, or remaining at the margin of the economy and societies being built by European settlers. In the Atlantic – Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay – the Europeans wiped out or expelled to far away places most of the original populations – less dense, organized and developed than their Andean counterparts. In Brazil, as in many Central American countries such as Haiti and

² There is a growing literature on the development of Latin American higher education institutions, most of it, however, in Spanish. Part of this summary is based on S. Schwartzman, *América Latina: Universidades en Transición*. Washington, Organization of American States, Colección INTERAMER, n. 6, 1996. The most complete policy document is probably Joaquín Brunner, coordinator, *Educación Superior en América Latina, Una Agenda de Problemas, Políticas y Debates en el Umbral del Año 2000*, Proyecto de Políticas Comparadas de Educación Superior, Universidad Nacional e Colombia, Bogotá, 1995. See also Carmen García Guadilla, *Conocimiento, educación superior y sociedad en América Latina*. Caracas: CENDES-Nueva Sociedad, 1996. (<http://www.airbrasil.org.br/simon/brunner95.htm>). In English language, see the articles in the special issue of *Higher Education* on 'Higher Education in Latin America', Kluwer Academic Publishers, vol. 25, 1, January (edited by Simon Schwartzman and José Joaquín Brunner). See also Claudio de Moura Castro and Daniel C. Levy, *Myth, reality, and reform - higher education policy in Latin America*. Washington, D.C: Inter-American Development Bank. Distributed by The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000. This text relies particularly on Schwartzman, 1996, and Brunner, 1995, which is the final report of a comparative study of higher education policies in Latin America.

Cuba, African slaves were brought in until the 19th century to work in sugar and later coffee plantations, and are still today the bulk of these country's poor and uneducated populations. Argentina, Uruguay and, in central America, Costa Rica, were populated mostly by European immigrants, which brought with them the cultural and educational traditions and habits the others did not have or were unable to retain and develop.

The first universities

The first universities in Colonial Latin America were established by the Catholic Church as early as the 16th century, but only with Independence, in the early 19th century, did the first higher education institutions in the region started to take shape. In those years, France was the model to be followed, and most countries, including Brazil, adopted what became known as the “Napoleonic model” of higher education. In France, the old universities were disbanded during the Revolution in the late 18th Century, and, with Napoleon, establishments for professional education were created within the civil service, to train specialists for the professions needed to manage the nation-state. Still today, the French “Grandes Écoles” – the École Polytechnique, the École Nationale de Administration, the École Normale, the École de Mines, and several others, are the country's most prestigious and disputed educational institutions, although the universities were also reestablished in the 19th century. In contrast with the German and Anglo-American traditions, the French Napoleonic system is highly centralized and controlled by the State, tends to be formal and based on rote learning, and provides little space for research and independent thinking. Technical training in mathematics and engineering takes precedence over humanities and basic sciences. The degrees provided by these institutions are considered professional licenses granted by the State, and in many cases are enough to provide the student with a job and a life-long professional career.

Different countries, of course, adopted and adapted the French model in their own ways, and dealt differently with the existing traditions of the old Catholic universities, as well as with the smaller, but sometimes significant influences of the German and British traditions of more autonomous and research based universities. While in Chile and Argentina national universities were established in the 19th century as part of broader efforts to develop education for the population as a whole, Brazil remained closer to the Napoleonic model until the 1930's, when its first universities were organized in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. Andrés Bello, in Chile, Domingos Faustino Sarmiento, in Argentina, José Bonifácio de Andrada, in Brazil,

are names associated with the earlier efforts to endow the Latin American countries with modern higher education institutions according to the standards of their time.

The Córdoba University Reform

The expression “University Reform”, in Latin America, is not usually associated with the current efforts to make higher education more responsive to the challenges of globalization and mass higher education of the 21st century, but to a movement that swept the region almost a century ago, starting in the Argentinean city of Córdoba, near the Andes mountains. The Córdoba Manifest, published by the students that led the Reform movement in those years, is a rhetorical document, with all the strong adjectives against the mediocrity and incompetence of the university professors and administrators, and all the good words about the need for science, research, and competence. Only the young, the students, could bring new blood and ideas to these decadent and irrelevant institutions. In a few years, the example and ideals of the Cordoba spread through the young generation of educated students in countries like Argentina, Chile, Venezuela, Peru and many others, and a new way of organizing the higher education institutions, probably original do Latin America, started to take shape.

The main consequence of the university reform was the establishment of a peculiar type of university autonomy, which, with small variations, remains in force today in most countries in the region. In this arrangement, governments have to pay for the maintenance of the universities, but have little say on the way universities are managed. Universities are governed as small and independent republics, with their authorities elected by the vote of students, professors and employees (in the original Cordoba conception, alumni), and all the decisions are taken by committees, with the active presence and participation of students and employees. They decide what to teach; how to admit, assess and grant degrees to the students; and how to hire and promote their academic staff. The universities are also free territory for independent and critical manifestations, and the principle of autonomy includes the universities’ territory – they should be managed by their own people, with entrance not allowed to the police or military authorities.

There are many good and bad things to say about this institutional invention. At best, autonomous universities of this type became free spaces for the criticism of entrenched oligarchies, for the flourishing of intellectual work, and the breeding of new leadership. They provided channels for social mobility for the children of new waves of immigrants, and even for some descendents of the region’s traditional

people, who could, at the same time, get their educational credentials and challenge the values and power position of the old oligarchies. Most Latin American political leaders and intellectuals of the late 20th century developed their skills and competencies in the highly politicized and militant environment of their country's universities.

Modernization and mass higher education

The years following the Second World War were times of optimism, in spite of the shadows of the raising cold war. Colonialism was crumbling everywhere, despotic governments were being overturned, and the new advances in science and technology, from atomic energy to medicine and the social sciences, heralded a future of economic development and well being. Higher education expanded very rapidly. There were 266 thousand higher education students in Latin America in 1950, 540 thousand in 1960, 1,500 thousand in 1970, 4,745 thousand in 1980, and 7 million in 1990.³ The old higher education institutions, although reformed in the Cordoba model, were criticized for not responding well enough to this growing demand, for resisting the introduction of high quality science and technology in their curricula, and for holding the mobility of a new generation of academics and intellectuals, and for not giving the students enough say in higher education decisions. In those years, these goals – broadening enrollment, allowing more student participation, doing more research – were perceived as being in harmony, and only limited by the backward and selfish interests of the old generation.

In fact, the reformed universities were never particularly good in providing high quality education and in developing research. In spite of some important exceptions, especially in the field of medicine⁴, research in Latin America developed very little, or remained isolated in institutions such as the Instituto Manguinhos in Brazil, El College de Mexico, or the Venezuelan IVIC (Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Cientificas). Education for the learned professions was from bad to reasonable depending on the place and institution.

³ Brunner, 1995.

⁴ Several Nobel Prizes in Medicine were given to Argentine or Argentina related researchers - Bernardo Houssay in 1947, Louis Leloir in 1970, Cesar Milstein in 1984 - a feat unsurpassed by any other country in the region.

Different countries responded to the expansion of higher education in different ways. In Argentina, Mexico, Uruguay, Peru, Venezuela, the national universities expanded to absorb all demand, regardless of their ability to handle the growing number and different competencies of the new students. The universities of Mexico and Buenos Aires became the largest in the world, with several hundred thousand students. In other countries, like Brazil, Colombia and Chile, public higher education remained restricted, and a growing network of private institutions absorbed excess demand.

Already in the sixties, the problems of higher education in Latin America were clear to see, although the solutions proposed were far from consensual. First, it was not true that open admission and research-based education were compatible goals, and nobody knew how to deal with *mass higher education*. The gigantic universities of Mexico, Buenos Aires and other countries were extremely wasteful and inefficient, and the initial generosity of open admissions led to large drop out rates and thousands of diploma holders with unknown skills. In countries where private education was allowed to expand, the question was the quality of the education sold in these institutions. The high prestige of the most traditional careers, such as medicine, engineering and law, were used as the basis and reference to the organization of new professions, such as communications, economics, nursery and administration, frustrating, in most cases, the attempts to develop short-term, vocationally oriented post-secondary course programs. Mass higher education was also a threat to the established professions, whose leaders worried about the competition and presumed incompetence of a growing number of diploma holders.

Second, in spite of the prevailing rhetoric of the integration between research, higher education and extension work, *scientific research* remained limited to a few institutions at best, and not necessarily within the universities. Brazil, in the late sixties, introduced many of the features of the American model of “Research University” in its higher education institutions, including the credit system, the organization of academic departments, and the creation of a large number of graduate course programs at the master and doctoral levels. Still today, Brazilian academic research is probably the best organized and well established in the region, but more than half of the existing doctoral programs are concentrated in a few universities in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, and the quality of what is done is not always cutting edge.

Third, there was a growing problem of *cost*. In the old universities, classes were given by established medical doctors, lawyers and engineers, who had their own

offices and companies, and taught as a matter of professional prestige or vocation. Without modern research and equipment, without having to deal with complex budgets and long-term planning, administration was restricted to a few persons, usually with low qualifications and small salaries. Since the sixties and seventies, however, this picture started to change. The new notion was that academic work should be a full-time activity, combining teaching and research. This required higher salaries for the academics, and better installations, libraries, equipment and support personnel. In most countries, and particularly in those that allowed public higher education to expand unhindered, there was just not enough to pay for these expenses, and no good will from governments to provide all the money demanded by their troublesome and complaining universities. For a few, in the best universities, and with good scientific training, it was possible to receive additional salaries and resources from science support agencies, or contracts for services with some government sectors, like agriculture and health. For most, the solution was to look for alternative sources of income, teaching in private institutions in the evening, selling services and managing different kinds of business and side activities between classes, which were kept to a minimum.

Fourth, there was a problem of equity. Access to higher education was restricted, at first, to the children of the elite. In the last ten years or so was expanded to a growing percentage of the age cohort, but the institutions and careers became strongly stratified, with the children of the elite entering the most prestigious careers and universities. The provision of free higher education to this elite was and is an obvious subsidy of the rich by the poor, particularly in countries with restricted admissions to public institutions, like Brazil.

Finally, there was an obvious political problem. Decades before the student uprisings that shocked the American and European establishments in 1968, starting in fact in Córdoba 1918, Latin American universities were the natural outlet for the revolt of the young generation of the local elites. After the War, as higher education expanded much more rapidly than the ability of the region's labor market to absorb the growing number of degree holders, a highly frustrated and angry young generation was born. In the troubled years of the cold war, universities in Venezuela, Peru, Mexico, Colombia and many other countries became the hotbeds not only for political opposition, but in some cases even for armed movements against their governments, resulting some cases in bloody interventions on the universities' territories, and their closure for extended periods of time. As these students became older and many of them entered the university as lecturers and professors, they brought with them the radical values and behavior of their younger years.

The second generation reforms: under authoritarian rule

Starting in the sixties, a second wave of reform and transformations swept Latin American higher education. In those years, economic stagnation, political conflicts and the cold war led to the demise of democratic governments in many countries, and their replacement by military regimes. At first, the authoritarian responded to these problems of higher education with sheer brute force. Later, however, some of them started to look for more positive solutions.

In Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile, the military governments intervened in the universities, and well-known intellectuals, scientists and academics were arrested or went to exile. In Brazil, the early period of confrontation was later replaced by a policy to increase graduate education and research in public universities, combined with relative deregulation for the expansion of private, low quality higher education. This support for graduate education and research was part of an ambitious project of the government to turn Brazil into a world-class player in military, economic and technological terms. Two or three very successful strategies were adopted at the time. The first was to provide financial support to good quality research groups in universities and non-university establishments with very little formalities, bypassing both the traditional rules of public accounting and the internal bureaucracy of the universities. Typically, a researcher would talk with the officer of a science-support agency, arguing for the relevance of his project, and, if he were successful, the money would be given to him personally to administer. It was a system based on trust, and was surprisingly free of corruption; although it is likely that money was also given to unworthy projects and initiatives. The second component was the establishment of peer review procedures for the assessment of graduate programs and research projects. The third component, last but not least, was the abundance of resources. In the seventies, Brazil was growing at rates about 7 to 10% a year, its scientific establishment was small, and no project considered worthy was left without financial support. By the early eighties, the debt crisis frustrated Brazil's ambition to become a world-class player, and a few years later power was returned to the civilians. The graduate and research systems established in the previous years, however, remained in place, although with less resources than before.

In Chile, the conflict between the Pinochet regime and the university communities and intellectuals was much more serious and bitter. In 1980, the country's higher education system was transformed along the lines inspired by the Chicago school of economics, part of a much broader project to turn the country into a market-oriented, efficiency-driven society. First, differentiation. Higher education

institutions were divided into three tiers - universities, institutes for professional education and technical schools - with only the first allowed to provide graduate education and more advanced professional degrees. Second, deregulation. Traditionally, most higher education institutions were concentrated in two large universities, the Universidad de Chile, public, and the Catholic University. With the new regulation, the two largest public universities were subdivided, and other similar institutions were created. Besides, drastic deregulation allowed for the creation of a large number of private institutions – 40 universities, 78 professional institutes and 161 technical schools between 1980 and 1990. Third, new financing mechanisms. Public money was given to the traditional and newly created public universities according to some formulas and their ability to attract good students; a special fund was created to support research projects; students were asked to pay tuition; and student loans were created for students who could not afford to pay. Higher education institutions were stimulated to compete for resources and sell services in the knowledge market. By 1990, government was providing only 30% of the resources for higher education, with 35% coming from private sources (tuition and gifts) and another 35% from selling services to public and private buyers. Because of these characteristics, Chile became known as the model for a reform based on self-regulation of higher education institutions, under a highly deregulated market, little state intervention, and diversified financing mechanisms.

Differently from Brazil and Chile, the authoritarian regimes in Argentina and Uruguay did not attempt to reform higher education in any significant way, except by expelling dissenting intellectuals, closing down social science departments, and curtailing the institutions' freedom to select their own officers. When democracy returned to Argentina in 1984, the decision was to reestablish the reorganize the University of Buenos Aires as it has been in the early sixties.

The third wave: reform in democratic regimes

The democratic regime established in Chile in 1990, as a coalition of socialists and Christian Democrats, decided to maintain the system started in the previous years, seeking, however, three modifications. First, increasing the amount of public money going to the universities; second, paying more attention to the problems of social inequity that persisted, changing some of the rules for tuition and student loans; and third, introducing accreditation and assessment mechanisms to learn about the quality of the education provided by the institutions, and to use this information as a basis for public support.

In Brazil, the civilian government established in 1985 did not touch the research and graduate institutions and organization created by the previous regime, but established a national commission to look into the country's higher education system as a whole, and make suggestions for reform. The recommendations coming out of this Commission included, among other items, more financial and administrative autonomy to universities, coupled with evaluation and accountability; more reliance on peer review, instead of bureaucratic oversight; institutional differentiation, through the adoption of different policies, expectations and requirements for research-oriented and teaching-oriented institutions; and new mechanisms of public financing, based on block-grants and performance-based controls. The Commission made also proposals for addressing the obvious social inequities of Brazilian higher education, which provides free and good quality education for the best qualified, coming from higher social strata, relegating those with poorer educational backgrounds to private institutions of lower quality. Because of the opposition of some of its members, the Commission did not recommend the adoption of tuition in public institutions. However, the proposals from the Commission were received with strong opposition from organized student and teacher's unions, and the government decided not to implement them.⁵

Throughout the eighties and nineties, the shortcomings of Latin American higher education became ever more glaring, but the ability of the new civilian governments to face up to the challenges and implement the necessary reforms were not high.⁶ At the conclusion of the 1995 report on the comparative study of higher education policies in Latin America, the following items were listed as composing the reform agenda for the new century:

Differentiation and diversification – the need to create effective multi-layered higher education systems, able to deal with the different public and tasks required from the higher education institutions – professional education, technical training,

⁵ For the Commission's proposals and ensuing debates, see http://www.airbrasil.org.br/comissao/comissao_frameset.htm . For a detailed account in English, see S. Schwartzman, "Brazil: Opportunity and Crisis in Higher Education," *Higher Education*, 17, 1 (99-119). (<http://www.airbrasil.org.br/simon/oportun.htm>)

⁶ The difficulties of implementing drastic reforms in democratic societies are not peculiar to Latin America. See, for Western Europe, Ladislaw Cerych and Sabatier, *Great Expectations and Mixed Performance – the Implementation of Higher Education in Europe*, European Institute of Education and Social Policy, 1986.

teacher education, graduate education, research – and in tune with the institutional differences of higher education institutions – public and private, large and small. A truly diversified system would require different rules and procedures for different institutions, a special attention to the educational needs of students coming from lower social strata and for working and elder students attending evening courses. In such systems, the traditional universities would cease to be the only model to be followed, to become one among a broader array of teaching and learning institutions at the tertiary level.

Adequate policies for the private sector – allowing private higher education to grow to respond to the market demand, but creating, at the same time, appropriate regulatory and assessment procedures to make sure that the education products they provide are of good quality and adequate for their students.

Diversified financial mechanisms – the financing of most public higher education in the region is done through public grants, based on historical costs and political preferences. It is necessary to introduce new criteria for establishing the proper amounts of public subsidies, based on the actual educational products provided by the universities; to give them more autonomy and flexibility to use their resources; and to allow and stimulate them to get additional funds, through tuition, research and contract grants, services, extension work, and so forth.

A new contract between higher education systems and governments. The current procedures for control and oversight of higher education institutions by governments are both excessive and ineffectual. Public universities are usually free to define their own course programs, to establish their own graduate education and research, and to elect their own authorities. At the same time, salary levels and career patterns are established by governments, and expenditures have to follow the bureaucratic procedures of civil service. A new contract would give more autonomy for universities and higher education institutions to find their place and adjust more readily to the different “markets” in which they operate – not only the markets for students and services, but also the markets for talent, competence, social relevance, research grants, philanthropic support, and international cooperation. The other side of more autonomy and freedom is more accountability, which should be based on performance indicators and continuous peer assessments.

Formation of a new generation of academics. Today, most Latin American public universities are staffed by academics without adequate training, working under inappropriate civil service contracts. Their salaries are usually not very high, and in

many countries are extremely low. But they are stable in their jobs, and their careers do not depend very much on personal achievement and competence. They are unionized, and use their political power to press for the maintenance or improvement of their working and employment conditions. At the other extreme, in private institutions, they may be paid by the hour, without regular contracts and possibilities for personal development and job stability⁷. New policies for human resources development should include efforts to strengthen and expand the existing graduate programs; to maintain and expand fellowship programs to allow the best qualified to be educated in world-class institutions abroad; to provide for flexible contract rules, allowing for full time and part time contracts, for the academic and the professionally oriented staff; and to link salary and job benefits to performance, working conditions, working load and job market competition. More often than not, a new human resource policy will require a shift from public service to a new kind of contract, more typical of educational and research institutions.

As Latin America enters the 21st century, most items of these agendas are being addressed by many countries, in spite of the difficulties of implementing sweeping and flashing reforms. In practice, most countries recognize the needs and the facts of differentiation, and are adjusting their legislation to this reality. Countries without much tradition of private education, such as Mexico and Argentina, are opening up to new institutions, and countries with large private sectors, such as Brazil and Chile, and trying to tackle the dilemmas of quality control, accountability and flexibility. Everywhere, countries are experimenting with assessment mechanisms for undergraduate and professional education. In Brazil, all students go through a national exam when they conclude their first-degree courses, and the results of these exams are used to assess the quality of the course programs. Chile and Argentina have established assessment boards and Commissions for their universities. In Mexico, Brazil and other countries, financial incentives are given to academic personnel that excel in terms of their teaching and research work; and, in many countries, the universities are getting more flexible in handling their resources and generating new sources of income. In recent years, many institutions have started experimenting with the use of new computer and distance communication technologies for the delivery of

⁷ For the academic profession in the region, see the articles of Ernesto Schiefelbein (Chile), Manuel Gil Antón (México) and Simon Schwartzman and Elizabeth Balbachevsky (Brazil) in Phillip G. Altbach, editor, *The International Academic Profession – Portraits of Fourteen Countries*, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1996.

educational contents, and, more recently still, Latin American countries are being faced with the growing presence of international educational institutions in their soil.

Therefore, in a sense, in spite of the absence of more radical and sweeping reforms, higher education in Latin America is forging ahead, more in some countries than in others. The main question is whether it is moving rapidly enough, and what would happen if it does not catch up with the times. Globalization, and the creation and expansion of a new international knowledge market, means not only that Latin American institutions need to adjust and modernize to respond to the new challenges, but also they are under the serious risk of losing their monopoly as education providers in their countries. Higher education institutions have now to compete, not only for resources and students, but also for their very survival as relevant social and cultural institutions, that they always tried to be.

In that sense, and in spite of their very different historical and cultural backgrounds, Latin America and South East Asia, Brazil and Indonesia share the same predicaments, and have similar agendas for the years to come. Because of this, they have much to learn from each other.